

MASSACHUSETTS RARE AND ENDANGERED PLANTS

REDROOT

(Lachnanthes caroliana (Lam.) Dandy)

DESCRIPTION

Redroot is a rather slender and erect perennial herb of the Bloodwort family. Leaves are much like Iris leaves, (flattened in one dimension) but paler green and more slender, growing several to a clump. From the center of the clump grows a stem 11.5 - 30"/3-8 dm. tall, which is smooth below, becoming woolly near the inflorescence. The three-petalled flowers are yellowish and occur in dense clusters which may be flat-topped or rounded. The entire inflorescence is densely woolly and yellowish white, about 1.2 - 3"/3-8 cm. wide. Flowering occurs from early July to late August.

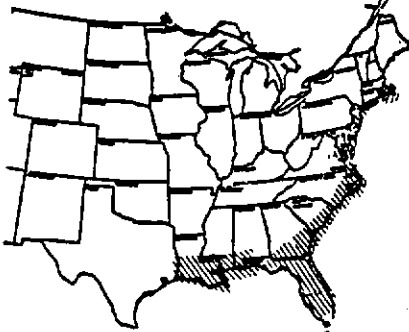


Gleason, H.A. The New Britton and Brown Illustrated Flora of the Northeastern U.S. and Adjacent Canada. New York Botanical Garden, 1932.

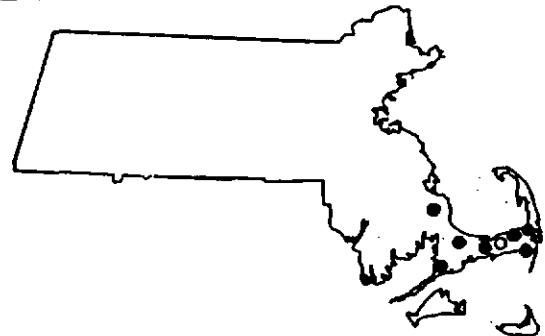
HABITAT IN MASSACHUSETTS

L. Caroliana inhabits the exposed sandy to peaty shores of Coastal Plain ponds. It is usually found in linear bands along the middle to upper margins of the shore or in coves. The survival of coastal plain pondshore species is dependent on the pronounced seasonal fluctuation of the water levels of these kettle hole ponds which have no inlet or outlet. Water levels are determined by the amount of rainfall and movement of groundwater, generally rising in the winter and spring and lowering in the summer and fall.

Other pondshore associates include Plymouth Gentian (Sabatia kennedyana), Threadleaf Sundew (Drosera filiformis), and Golden Hedge-hyssop (Gratiola aurea).



Distribution of Redroot



● Verified since 1978
○ Reported prior to 1978

Distribution in Massachusetts by Town

RANGE

Redroot occurs in widely separated (disjunct) areas along the coastal plain in Nova Scotia, southeastern Massachusetts, Long Island, southern New Jersey, and from Maryland to Florida, Louisiana and Cuba.

POPULATION STATUS IN MASSACHUSETTS

This species is considered a species of "Special Concern" in Massachusetts. Since 1978, 21 occurrences have been verified; 10 other historical occurrences have been recorded.

As with all the pondshore species there has been a loss of habitat through development of pondshores for housing and recreational use. Lowering of water quality in the ponds by run-off and leaking septic systems and alteration of the water table have also reduced available habitat. Like other pond species, Redroot varies in abundance from year to year depending on water level. It may survive in a dormant state for one or more years when conditions are unfavorable.